



May/June 2011



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

One day a few weeks ago, a fellow dropped by the Nightwatch office to ask about volunteering. He said that he and his girlfriend had the idea to get a bunch of bagels and walk around downtown handing them out to the homeless. They would call their program, "Bagels for Bums." But the more he and his girlfriend thought of it, they concluded that maybe they could use the experience of first volunteering at a place like Operation Nightwatch. "We're not quite sure we know what we're doing," he said.

I would have said that was a gross understatement.

It's not unusual to find any number of "vigilante do-gooder" groups downtown at night doing what they think is "helping the homeless." Often these groups are affiliated with churches, but not always. What they have in common is that they don't have the benefit of expertise of anyone who actually knows the homeless, and neither have they compensated for their lack-of-connection by doing any research of their own. But without really knowing those they seek to serve, the question rises whether their ideas of who the homeless are and what they need even approach reality.

Take my visitor's "Bagels for

Bums" idea. If he knew anything about the guests who come to our Hospitality Center, he would know that most of them don't even like bagels. Those with bad teeth reject them because bagels are too tough to eat. Secondly, my visitor's assumption was that the best way to help the downtown homeless was to feed them. But to be homeless is not necessarily the same as being hungry. With the many feeding programs available, few on streets downtown are missing meals.

And in simply having done the most elementary research, my visitor would have known that our guests like to be respected as human beings, just like everyone else. They prefer not to think of themselves as "bums."

Indeed, I thought of my visitor later that very week after one of our guests came into the Hospitality Center who was speaking seriously of committing suicide. His story was a classic one of reversal-of-fortune. He once had a family, a business, a condo in the Pearl District. He lived comfortably and he held stature. Now all was lost. In his despair, feeling he had nothing left, to snuff his life along with the rest of it seemed but a minor thing. I imagined how little it might take to send him over the edge. Perhaps as little as hearing someone call him a "bum."

Once again, I am drawn back to Jesus' parable in Matthew 25:35-46 where God welcomes into glory those who served him by giving food when he was hungry, drink when he was thirsty, clothing when he was naked, and hospitality when he was abandoned by others. Those who are among the righteous say, "Lord, when did we see

*you* in such plight and help *you*?" And God replies, "Even as you did it to the least of these, you did it to me."

This parable is not just a call to serve. It is a call to *carry a certain attitude* in our service. For if it is true that in every needy individual we meet God incarnates himself to us anew, then how can we reach out to the individual without the greatest humility, care, and respect? How can we possibly be condescending, patronizing, or judgmental? How can we help without wanting to know that individual as he really is? Because if that truly is God coming to us in the tattered clothing with the bedroll on his back, we're not the ones doing him the favor in the encounter—God's doing *us* the favor by allowing us to meet him once again in this time and in this place.

And while in carrying such an attitude, we still might know exactly what we're doing, the mechanics of it won't much matter. The substance of it will be blessed.

Gary L. Davis

## THE NIGHTWATCH ANNUAL CAMPAIGN IS COMING!

Since the Nightwatch Board of Directors adopted a budget last year that operates on a July-June fiscal year, our big fundraising push is now scheduled for the spring, rather than for the end of the year.

Watch for additional information to arrive from us as to how you can help support in the coming year.

We appreciate your generosity!

## FROM THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Operation Nightwatch has officially launched its college immersion program! And we did it exactly on schedule.

The idea behind an immersion program is to provide a safe environment for young adults to be exposed to social injustices so that barriers might be broken down, and the immersion participants may, in turn, be inspired to correct those injustices. How perfect it was, then, when a student group at Humboldt State University contacted Gary in hopes of planning an alternative spring break trip by volunteering at Nightwatch.

In the time I got to spend with the sixteen undergraduate students and one staff member, I was blown away by their excitement, their willingness to work and their genuine engagement with Nightwatch's guests. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the week, the group toured other organizations working with people who are homeless in Portland (e.g. JOIN, Downtown Chapel). By the time they volunteered with us on Thursday and Friday, the Humboldt students knew what to expect. Even though we had pretty average nights in terms of the number of guests on both nights, the Hospitality Center felt packed with smiling people and positive energy.

On Friday, we took a walking tour of downtown led by Larry Bishop, a former Nightwatch guest and now long-time volunteer at St. Stephen's. After being introduced to many of the agencies that serve people who are homeless in downtown, we were able to unpack what we had seen over a chili lunch provided by St. Stephen's Table. As Jen, the group's co-leader later wrote me:

"Thank you so much for having us over and letting everyone in the group participate in the things that Operation Nightwatch does. It was a great experience for all of us and we are working at having some of those ideas in Humboldt County. As of now we are just serving our homeless population with what we can and I want to you to know that we were greatly influenced by

Operation Nightwatch that now we too are trying to spend time with the population we serve."

This year, one of my goals has been to make at least one person smile per night. With the inception of our immersion program, I may have added a new goal to my roster: if I can make at least 18 people passionate about the just service of others through hospitality and kind interaction, then I've done my job.

Cole

## DR. JOHN HARDY JOINS NIGHTWATCH BOARD

The Nightwatch Board of Directors welcomes its newest member, Dr. John Hardy.

John grew up in Lake Oswego, attending Lakeridge High School. Upon graduation, he went to the Air Force Academy and then received an M.D. from OHSU. His medical practice was mostly during his many years serving with the Air Force, where his specialty was Family Medicine. He is now in private practice, providing a combination of primary care and substance dependence treatment.

John's association with Nightwatch began about three years ago. He first came with a volunteer group from his church, but has maintained his involvement, regularly volunteering about twice a month at the downtown Hospitality Center. Recently, John has been helping with the Mobile Hospitality Center and is advising us in our plan to convert part of the vehicle into a medical exam area.

We welcome John as a valuable new asset to our Board!

## CHAPLAIN'S NOTES

*[ED. NOTE: When most people think of Nightwatch, they think of the three-nights-a-week the Hospitality Center is open. But Nightwatch is actually open five nights a week, offering options such as worship and Bible study. Because this is a side of Nightwatch many overlook, we've invited our chaplain Roger Fuchs to contribute something to each newsletter.]*

Four years. That's how long we spent in high school, how long it usually takes to get a bachelor's degree. It's how long I served in the U.S. Air Force. When we gather for Operation Nightwatch Worship on Easter Sunday, we will mark four years of this ministry and begin our fifth. That's over 200 worship services, times of prayer, evenings of song, celebrations of Holy Communion and shared meals. That's 200 nights when Nightwatch would otherwise not have been "watching over the flock by night". Two hundred. That's like offering hospitality every day for over seven months straight.

I cannot begin to name the ways in which this ministry has opened my heart and changed my life. We've prayed for illnesses, loved ones, cancer, addictions, family members, children, pets, our President and the Congress, Mayor Adams, the Portland Police, people hit by cars, our soldiers and their families, Nightwatch outings. My wife Jean and I have been prayed for and loved by this community through her brain tumor and surgery. We've prayed for and touched our world through offerings supporting local food pantries and the healing work of Mercy Corps in Haiti, Chile and Japan. We've prayed for a home for Nightwatch, given thanks for our new St. Stephens home and housing for many of our guests.

## Chaplin's Notes (continued)

Four years of hospitality, always the ministry of Christ and his followers. Four years of building relationships and trust by being there. Four years of seeing guests bloom as human beings in unimagined ways.

"Come and see" is the recurring theme in John's gospel—especially at the empty tomb on that first Easter. Join us at Operation Nightwatch Worship some Sunday at 4 PM. All are welcome. Always. Come and see.

Oh, and before I forget:  
**"Four more years!"**

*Pastor Roger*

## NEW JESUIT VOLUNTEER COMING IN AUGUST

James Antonio will be our next Jesuit Volunteer to serve as Program Coordinator, beginning in August.

James is a Seattle native and a graduate of College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA, where he majored in mathematics and minored in physics. He is currently serving as a Jesuit Volunteer in Nashville, TN, with a program called Project Return. Project Return works with those recently released from incarceration, helping them to reintegrate into society. In his capacity, James provides case management, leads classes on how to find employment, and helps with food distribution and financial assistance.

## NIGHTWATCH WILL BE AT THE STARLIGHT PARADE . . .

. . . except you won't see us in the parade. We'll be working behind the scenes, passing out special fortune cookies to the spectators with Nightwatch-specific messages.

Want to help in the fun? Call or text us (503-220-0438), or send us an email at

[info@operationnightwatch.org](mailto:info@operationnightwatch.org).



**Gary Vaughan, ONW's first director, speaking at Memorial Service**

## WISH LIST

We are in special need of:

Blankets / sleeping bags

Sweatshirts

Toothbrushes

Small (traveler's) tubes of toothpaste

Men's athletic shoes

Books/magazines, mostly of appeal to men

## NEW STREET HOSPITALITY TEAM MEMBERS TRAINED

We have had an influx of new members to our Street Hospitality Teams. By going out onto the streets, the teams extend the work of Nightwatch to those who for whatever reason cannot or will not access the Hospitality Center.

Our newly-trained team members are Zoe Gombart, Corene Pettit, Richard Sproat, Danielle Hardman, and Alex Forsyth.

## LIFE AT THE HOSPITALITY CENTER

The following are excerpts from our nightly log:

"Need to close at 10 tonight due in part to Lewis & Clark midterms and a group of no show volunteers.

"Very mellow evening. Lots of folks signed the soon-to-be-painted wall and C -- painted a really beautiful tree. I'm going to feel really guilty painting over on Saturday.

"Talked to J--, a new guest; his philosophy on Social Security is that everyone who receives a check should have to work in exchange. He likes Christian rock music A LOT.

"E-- moved from Pennsylvania to San Francisco three years ago to go to nursing school—he has all of his prerequisites but got mixed up in heroin in the process.

"Also met T-- and TJ who are on an extended camping trip. They're back in PDX after two years in Boulder, CO, but left after it became illegal to be homeless in Boulder."

"Once again a totally mellow night, even though we were cramped up with the tables moved away from the walls due to the new paint job.

"S.P. wants to be a rock star, and I feel that some day he will be after ascending from such a rock bottom place."



**Bowling Outing**

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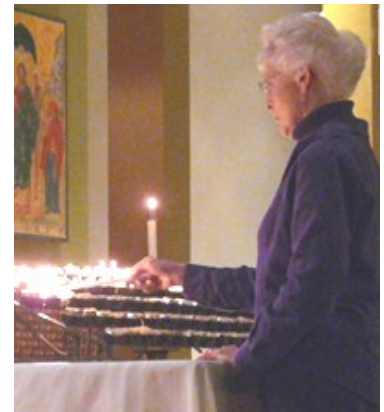
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*Outing: Pearson Air Museum*



*Ginny  
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**OPERATION NIGHTWATCH**

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